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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3125  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0384  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3294  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1325  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 7505  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000293

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KISL](#) [UNSC](#) [BM](#) [ID](#)  
SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT FLEXES ITS MUSCLES ON BURMA

REF: A. JAKARTA 98 (UNSC RESOLUTION ON BURMA)  
[1](#)B. JAKARTA 32 (DEMARCHE ON BURMA)  
[1](#)C. 06 JAKARTA 1176 (DPR: FEW ACCOMPLISHMENTS)

JAKARTA 00000293 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Political Officer Eric W. Kneedler, reason: 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

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[1](#)1. (C) In a relatively rare moment of constructive assertiveness, the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR) chastised the government of Indonesia for abstaining on the UNSC Burma resolution vote (Ref C). On January 25th, the DPR's Commission I - the Commission for foreign policy and defense issues - summoned Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda to appear before the Commission and explain the GOI's abstention (Ref A). Commission I legislators from across party lines admonished Wirajuda for missing a golden opportunity to help resolve the Burma issue and several legislators lamented the fact that the abstention served as a tacit endorsement of the junta's gross human rights violations. Legislators took Wirajuda to task and questioned his assertion that supporting a policy of "dual function" for the military would gradually lead to a democratic transition. In the lead-up to the hearing, we provided Commission I Chairman Theo Sambuaga with Burma talking points and fact sheets and he vowed to distribute them throughout the Commission. We will continue to work with Commission I where possible to pressure the GOI to re-evaluate its policy. End Summary.

COMMISSION I CHAIRMAN INCENSED WITH ABSTENTION

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[1](#)2. (C) We called on Commission I Chairman and Golkar Vice Chairman Theo Sambuaga in advance of FM Wirajuda's appearance before Commission I and Sambuaga expressed his profound outrage at the GOI's decision to abstain on the UNSC Burma vote. Sambuaga told us that support for the resolution should have been a "no-brainer" and he lamented the missed opportunity. He said Commission I members from across the party spectrum were similarly appalled and the Commission had unanimously agreed to summon Wirajuda before the Commission so that they could put the members' collective concern on the record and question the rationale behind the GOI's vote. We offered to provide Sambuaga with Burma briefing materials, as well as the talking points we used in the GOI demarche

outlined in Ref A. Sambuaga welcomed the input and said he would share the materials with other members of Commission I.

DPR PUTS FM'S FEET TO THE FIRE  
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13. (C) During Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda's January 25 appearance before Commission I, the DPR legislators sitting on the foreign affairs and defense Commission took turns criticizing the GOI's UNSC Burma vote abstention. The criticism came from all corners and represented a rare instance of inter-party unity in opposition to official government policy.

14. (C) DPR legislator AS Hikam, from Gus Dur's National Awakening Party (PKB), got the ball rolling in questioning the GOI's commitment to promoting democracy and human rights. Hikam noted Indonesia's own transition from a military authoritarian regime and argued that this recent experience should inform Indonesia's foreign policy and create a resolve to assist democratic transformation in the region. Hikam characterized Wirajuda's willingness to see a constructive "dual function" role in Burma's military as extremely hypocritical given Indonesia's own negative experience with "dwifungsi," the dual civilian-military role the TNI enjoyed during the Suharto era.

15. (C) Legislator Jeffrey Massie, from the Prosperous Peace Party (PDS), quickly followed suit, asserting that the government's policy did not properly reflect the DPR's perspective on the issue and therefore the opinion of the Indonesian people. He suggested the GOI's abstention stemmed from concern that a positive vote would have invited unwelcome scrutiny to Indonesia's own human rights record, which he said still lacked accountability for past actions. Jeffrey closed by expressing regret that the GOI had not

JAKARTA 00000293 002.2 OF 002

seized the opportunity for a "breakthrough" in dealing with the Burmese problem.

16. (C) Djoko Susilo, from Amien Rais' National Mandate Party (PAN), agreed with Massie's criticism and questioned rhetorically whether Indonesia supported human rights as a matter of foreign policy. Djoko noted Indonesia's previous record as an advocate for human rights in the southern Philippines, Cambodia, and Vietnam and argued that there was an apparent double standard with respect to its Burma policy. Djoko derided GOI plans for a joint commission between Indonesia and Burma, saying that it would not help solve the problem.

FM RESPONDS  
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17. (C) Foreign Minister Wirajuda defended the government's abstention by arguing that either a yes or no vote would have had a deleterious impact. A yes vote would only have antagonized Burma and driven them closer to China, while a no vote would have appeased the Burmese government and sent the message that inaction was acceptable. After reviewing the matter with President Yudhoyono and the entire foreign affairs team, Wirajuda had determined that Indonesia should work with ASEAN partners to develop a common approach, while continuing bilateral efforts to promote democratic reform. One initiative flowing from the bilateral approach, he said, was that Indonesia would promote reform by sharing its own experiences with dwifungsi, an experience that had eventually given rise to democracy and might help transform Burma.

COMMENT  
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18. (C) While Commission I's grilling of FM Wirajuda is unlikely to have any immediate impact on the GOI's approach to Burma, we are encouraged by the DPR's initiative on the

issue, which this time supported U.S. policy goals. The incident could also represent the start of a more muscular legislative approach to foreign policy issues, an area that traditionally has almost exclusively been the domain of the presidency, or at the very least represent a greater focus on the role of human rights issues in foreign policy. Whether the legislature will build on this experience and claim such a role remains to be seen.

PASCOE